

tions of the American Heart Association.

This book is too incomplete for a reference text and too fragmented for a practical guide. Used in combination with the British APLS course it may provide reasonable grounding in managing pediatric emergencies. However, I do not think that the busy emergency physician, family physician or pediatrician will find this book useful for quick reference when providing emergency care for children.

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References

1. Silverman BK (ed): *Advanced Pediatric Life Support: the Pediatric Emergency Medicine Course*, 2nd ed. American Academy of Pediatrics/American College of Emergency Physicians, Elk Grove, Ill, 1993
2. Chameides L (ed): *Textbook of Pediatric Advanced Life Support*, American Academy of Pediatrics/American Heart Association, Elk Grove, Ill, 1988

US slant and college-graduate reading level

The Complete Guide to Fertility & Family Planning. Sarah Freeman and Vern L. Bullough. 129 pp. Illust. Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY. 1993. \$23.95 (US), hardcover; \$15.95, paperback. ISBN 0-87975-785-X, hardcover; 0-87975-798-1, paperback

Sarah Freeman is assistant professor in the School of Nursing and director of the Women's Health Nurse Practitioner Program, at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo. Vern L. Bullough is distinguished professor of history at SUNY. This slim volume, the second joint venture by the authors (the first was a guide

book on contraception for the public), sets out to offer valuable information and guidance for those who are struggling to start a family.

The book is nicely produced — my review copy was a handsome hardback — and organized simply and effectively into chapters that deal with normal reproductive functioning, what can go wrong, how problems can be diagnosed and treated, and what can be done when there is an apparently insurmountable obstacle to fertility.

The book is largely accurate and informative, but two major shortcomings will keep it from the shelves of my practice lending library: it is specific to the US medical and legal systems and written at a college-graduate or university-graduate level.

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Lots of advice but not recommended

The Allergy Survival Guide. Jane Houlton. 498 pp. Illust. Vermilion, imprint of Ebury Press, Random House, London. 1993. \$22. ISBN 009-177505-1

This is a self-help book for people who feel they have medical symptoms due to allergy or sensitivity to the environment. The author, a nonmedical person, was prompted to write the book after experiencing a distressing multisymptom illness. She describes her frustration with the lack of answers she received from doctors until she underwent investigation and treatment at an environmental unit in Britain: "I tested positive to every substance tried on me with the exception of melon and Malvern Water."

The book is well written, well researched and well organized. The chapters explaining the nature of "classic" allergic problems would be helpful to the lay reader. However, most doctors in Canada would have difficulty accepting one of the main premises of this book, that some people have illnesses because they are sensitive to minute traces of chemicals in the air, water and food. "Doctors practising today have been trained in the subject of allergy on the basis of what is scientifically proven. . . . Most do not accept that illnesses such as migraine, arthritis, colitis and mental symptoms can result from an adverse reaction to something in the environment, apart from certain well researched kinds of food intolerance, for instance, or exposure to high levels of chemicals." The author says that some doctors use the broader definition of allergy associated with "environmental medicine" or "clinical ecology."

A large part of the book is devoted to self-diagnosis and the self-care of presumed environmental illness, but the author always admonishes one to check with a doctor first to ensure that something else isn't the cause of symptoms.

There is advice on a range of subjects, from what the "sensitive" person should look for in buying a second-hand car to water treatment methods for those sensitive to tap water. There are explanations of treatments, from drug therapy to herbal therapy. The section on first aid and home medicine contains much common-sense advice on dealing with minor problems. However, the list of suppliers and support groups is relevant only to Britain.

Would I recommend this book to my patients? No. Clinical ecologists may think differently.

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